



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM WEEK
May 12 - 18, 2002

By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS On any given school day, more than 26 million children receive a nutritious lunch under the National School Lunch Program. Over 14 million of these meals are served free or at a reduced price to needy children who otherwise might not have a midday meal. Because of the combined efforts of Federal, State and local professionals, the school lunch program is able to assist in maintaining the health and well being of these children. However, once the school doors have closed for the summer, school meals are not available. As a consequence, a large proportion of these children face the prospect of going hungry for more than two months. This is particularly true for the poorest of our children.

WHEREAS To meet this need, Congress authorized the Summer Food Service Program to provide meals to children who are not in school during the summer or at other times of the year if their schools operate on a year-around continuous school calendar. This program is targeted to children living in poor areas, defined as areas where at least 50 percent of the children enrolled in school are eligible for free or reduced price school meals. Where this program is operated at schools, parks, camps and other sites, poor children are assured of receiving a midday meal that is comparable to the lunches they receive in schools.

WHEREAS Unfortunately, far too few children participate in this vital program. In recent years, only about 2 million children have received meals on a given day. Therefore, to heighten public awareness of the benefits of the program for poor communities, to encourage wider participation by eligible sponsors, and to increase the number of participating children, the United States Department of Agriculture is designating the second full week of May of each year as Summer Food Service Program Week and is issuing this proclamation formally observing this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ANN M. VENEMAN, Secretary of Agriculture, do hereby proclaim May 12 through May 18, 2002, as Summer Food Service Program Week. I call upon communities to recognize the important achievements of schools and organizations that sponsor this program, and to ensure that children and their parents are aware of this benefit. I also strongly urge eligible schools and organizations that are not participating to make this vital component of our nutrition safety net available in the future.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 1st day of April in the year two thousand and two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

ANN M. VENEMAN
SECRETARY